



My name is Jennifer Hernandez and I am a Program Manager for the Department of Social Work at the Hospital of Central Connecticut. I oversee the Nurturing Families Network funded by Children's Trust Fund through Department of Social Services.

In this current fiscal crisis there is no doubt that we need to make some cuts in spending. We all have to look at our spending and evaluate what are our must haves and can do withouts. Individually our programs throughout the state already operate on small budgets and have managed to run effectively over the past several months with cuts to our spending. We do an amazing amount of work with little money. Within our programming the average annual cost to serve a family is around \$3,000 or \$58.00 a week. When we look at DCF and intervention services they cost our state an estimated \$30,000 annually per family or \$577.00 week. The cost saving speaks for itself.

Over the past ten years our state has already invested millions of dollars into these programs to prevent child abuse and neglect. What makes us stand out is that we have been able to prove that our programming is working. We are among few programs that are evaluated for outcomes.

The millions spent have been invested wisely. The rate of substantiated child abuse and neglect in high risk families receiving home visitation is significantly lower than state or national rates. For Nurturing Families Network families, the rate of child abuse and neglect is on average 3% compared to 20% for families not participating in this type of programming. The numbers offer us justification as to why we should keep the programs open. We are preventing abuse and saving the state money.

In addition, there are hundreds of staff members to consider as you contemplate these cuts. The devastation that would come from program closure would increase unemployment rates. As grant funded programs, our host organizations will not have positions for us. We will not simply be absorbed into new positions; we will be out of work.

Thank you

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